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₹1 LAKH CRORE TO CREATE WORLD'S LARGEST GRAIN STORAGE CAPACITY

The Cabinet has cleared the proposal aimed at reducing crop damages, preventing distress sales by farmers & strengthening India's food security

MOVE TO STRENGTHEN COOPERATIVE SECTOR

The government is planning to create 700 lakh tonne of grain storage capacity in the cooperative sector over the next five years, said Union minister Anurag Thakur. This will help strengthen the country's cooperative sector, as Primary Agricultural Credit Societies can diversify into the storage of food grains. The move is also expected to help create jobs in rural India, the minister added

2,000 TONNE GODOWN IN EACH BLOCK

- A godown of 2,000 tonne capacity will be established in each block
- Implementation of proposal will start within 45 days of Cabinet approval
- Thakur said the country's foodgrains production is around 3,100 lakh tonne, while the storage capacity is only 47% of the total output. He noted that in developed economies, the storage capacities are higher than output

2,150L tonnes

PROJECTED LEVEL OF INDIA'S TOTAL GRAIN STORAGE CAPACITY AFTER 5 YEARS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

It's a challenge for govt to roll out 2 guarantees

Final decision at tomorrow's cabinet meet

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI & ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

THE Siddaramaiah government is facing the challenge of working out modalities and a mechanism to implement two of the five guarantees the Congress party promised to voters in the run-up to the May 10 Assembly elections.

A final decision on rolling out the guarantees is expected at a cabinet meeting on Friday. The meeting was supposed to be held on Thursday.

The main challenge is to implement 'Yuva Nidhi' (Rs 3,000 per month for unemployed graduates and Rs 1,500 per month for unemployed diploma holders for two years or until they get a job) and 'Griha Lakshmi' (Rs 2,000 per month for every woman head of the family).

Some ministers and officials, who attended the meeting, admitted that the challenge is in identifying genuine beneficiaries.

However, the government is confident of rolling out 'Gruha Jyothi' (free power upto 200 units for every household), 'Anna Bhagya' (10 kg foodgrains per person in every BPL family) and 'Shakthi' (free travel for women in government-run ordinary buses) guarantees.

Food and Civil Supplies Minister KH Muniyappa and Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy said 'Anna Bhagya' and 'Shakti' guarantees could be implemented comfortably.

"The government has decided to implement all five guarantees and discussions will be held in this regard at the cabinet meeting on Friday," Siddaramaiah told reporters after holding a meeting with his cabinet colleagues and officials on Wednesday.

The Finance Department gave a presentation to ministers on the implementation of five guarantees. "The officials also briefed the ministers about the financial implications," Siddaramaiah said.

The CM estimated that it is likely to cost Rs 50,000 crore annually. CONTINUED ON: P6

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah chairs a meeting in Bengaluru on Wednesday

The government can manage with June month's guarantees as the CM is likely to allocate funds in the budget which he is likely to present in the first week of July

Krishna Byregowda, Revenue Minister

PRIYANK GETS IT/BT, MB PATIL INFRA DEVPT

Bengaluru: Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge will once again be in-charge of IT and BT Department, with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday affecting a minor re-allocation of portfolios. Large and Medium Industries Minister M B Patil has been given additional charge of Infrastructure Development. P6

Rahul's God quip to attack Modi

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

SENIOR Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing the diaspora at the US, drawing a sharp counterattack from the BJP.

Addressing a gathering in San Francisco, Rahul sarcastically said there are people in India who think they know more than God and Modi is 'one such specimen'. "We have a group of people in India who are absolutely convinced that they know everything. They think they know even more than God. They could sit down with God and have a conversation and explain to him what is going on. And of course, our prime minister is one such specimen," he said.

"I think if you sat Modi ji down next to God, Modi ji would start explaining to God how the universe works and God would get confused about what have I created," Rahul quipped.

In his pushback, Union minister Anurag Thakur retorted that Rahul's insult of India during his foreign visits was unacceptable. "He wants to insult Modi but ends up insulting India, questioning India's progress. He is trying to defame India at a time the world is acknowledging our growing stature," said Thakur.

Rahul in his address also criticised the inauguration of the new Parliament building, saying, "These are distractions. The real issues are unemployment, price rise, spread of anger and hatred, crumbling education system, price of education, price of health care. BJP can't really discuss them so then they have to do the whole sceptre thing."

We have a group of people who understand everything. They can speak to scientists and explain science to them... In life, you can't understand anything if you are not ready to listen

Shah visits 2 more Manipur districts

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

UNION home minister Amit Shah on Wednesday visited Moreh in Tengnoupal and Kangpokpi — two of the violence-hit districts in Manipur — and held discussions with various organisations to restore normalcy.

"Held a meeting with the delegations of Kuki and other communities at Moreh. They expressed strong support for the government's initiatives to restore normalcy," Shah later tweeted. This was his third day in Manipur.

At both Moreh and Kangpokpi, he was accompanied by home secretary A K Bhalla and Intelligence Bureau chief Tapan Kumar Deka.

Moreh has a mixed population of Tamil, Nepali, Bihari, Rajasthani, Bengali, Punjabi, besides Meitei and Kuki communities. Hundreds of people, holding the national flag, greeted Shah when he visited the two places.

Kuki organisations reiterated the demand for 'separate administration' and the immediate withdrawal of police commandos from Moreh. In a memorandum, they further demanded that Meitei radical groups Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun be declared outlawed, citing their alleged involvement in the violence. The also sought a helicopter service from Moreh to Aizawl in Mizoram and Guwahati.

A Kuki outfit claimed Shah positively responded to the demands on the withdrawal of police commandos and helicopter service. At both places, he appealed to people to maintain peace.

Meanwhile, a civilian was injured in an exchange of fire between security forces and suspected militants in Imphal East district. Another gunfight was reported from Sugnu in Kakching district on Tuesday night.

Home minister Amit Shah meets Kukis at a relief camp in Kangpokpi | PTI

Strife pushes sport out of mind of top athletes

FIROZ MIRZA @ Chennai

IN August last year, Likmabam Shushila Devi became the first judoka from India to bag multiple medals (both silver) at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. A year before that, she was the lone judoka from the country at the Tokyo Olympics. With big events like 2024 Paris Olympics lined up for the next couple of years, the 28-year-old should ideally be training. However, she is shuttling between home and a relief camp sheltering around 400 displaced people in her village Heingang Mayai Leikai, Imphal East (Manipur).

Sport is not even on her mind right now. "How can we think of sports now? There are people here whose houses were burnt in front of them and their relatives killed. Hundreds of them have taken refuge in camps. It's been a month since the ordeal," Shushila told this daily.

EXPRESS SPECIAL

The relief camp set up at a community hall of a sports club has pregnant women and newborns. "Around 100 people sleep in a hall with hardly one fan in the heat. The summer means acute water shortage too. Somehow we are managing by donating foodgrain and helping them cook. But how long will it continue as even we will run out of stock someday," said the judoka.

Another issue players are facing is lack of training. All the sports centres are shut. Bem Bem Devi, who went to meet Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday along with stars like Sarita Devi and Kunjarani Devi, said the situation is hurting athletes. "It is saddening because no sporting activity is going on. The Asian Games is coming up and preparation of every athlete here has been disrupted." P19

MUNDE RAP

Probe against sidelined WFI chief on: Police

UJWAL JALALI AND SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ New Delhi/Mumbai

THE Delhi Police on Wednesday said its probe against sidelined Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh in a couple of sexual harassment cases is still in progress, refuting reports in a section of the media that sufficient evidence was not found to arrest him.

"The cases filed by women wrestlers are still under consideration. Status reports are being filed before the court regarding the investigation," a senior Delhi Police official said. Curiously, the police had from its official Twitter handle stated that the media's claims were wrong, but deleted that tweet after some time.

Singh is facing two cases of sexual harassment, one of them on a complaint by a minor, under the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act. But a man claiming to be the uncle of the minor victim sought to demolish her charges, alleging she was not a minor. He went on to accuse the agitating top wrestlers of using the minor to frame Singh.

The pushback came from Delhi Commission for Women's Chairperson Swati Maliwal, who said it was a criminal offence to reveal the identity of the minor victim.

Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur urged protesting wrestlers not to take any step that could undermine sports or hurt players, adding proper action will be taken once the probe is over.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra BJP MP Pritam Munde, daughter of the late Gopinath Munde, became the first BJP lawmaker to express he displeasure at the denial of justice to the wrestlers. "The government should have quickly carried out an inquiry. Action should have been taken against the guilty. As a Lok Sabha MP and woman, I am very much concerned about it," Pritam Munde said.

Hindu women's plea for right to pray at Gyanvapi maintainable: HC

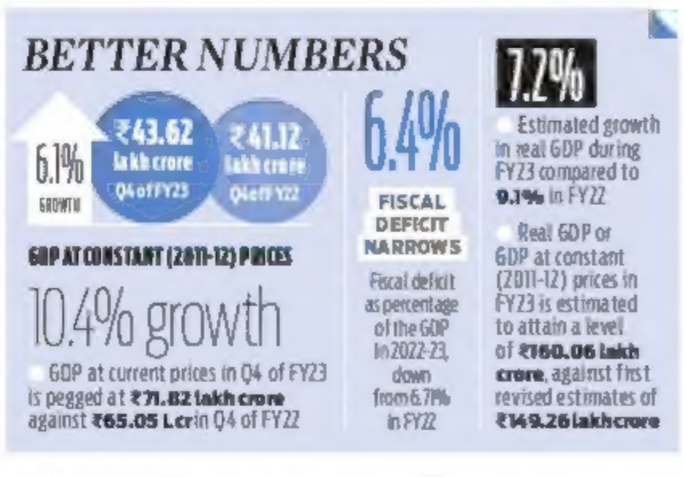
NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

THE Allahabad High Court on Wednesday upheld the Varanasi district court's order that the suit filed by five Hindu women seeking permission for daily worship of Goddess Shringar Gauri in the Gyanvapi complex was maintainable.

The bench of Justice J J Munir had reserved its judgment after hearing both parties at length on December 24, 2022. The order came in a revision petition filed by Anjuman Intezamia Masjid (Gyanvapi mosque management committee) in October 2022 against the Varanasi district court's order of September 12, 2022.

District judge A K Vishwesha had dismissed the mosque committee's objection under Order 7 Rule 11 of CPC. The judge observed the suit of the Hindu women plaintiffs was not barred by the Places of Worship (Special Provision) Act, 1991, the Waqf Act, 1995 and UP Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Act-1983, as was being claimed by the mosque committee.

In their plea for right to worship Goddess Shringar Gauri in the Gyanvapi complex located next to Kashi Vishwanath temple, the women said the mosque was once a temple, which was demolished during Emperor Aurangzeb's rule.


BETTER NUMBERS
6.1% GROWTH
₹43.62 lakh crore Q4 of FY23
₹41.12 lakh crore Q4 of FY22
GDP AT CONSTANT (2011-12) PRICES
10.4% growth
GDP at current prices in Q4 of FY23 is pegged at ₹71.82 lakh crore against ₹65.05 Lcr in Q4 of FY22
6.4%
FISCAL DEFICIT NARROWS
Fiscal deficit as percentage of the GDP in 2022-23, down from 6.7% in FY22
7.2%
Estimated growth in real GDP during FY23 compared to 9.1% in FY22
Real GDP or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices in FY23 is estimated to attain a level of ₹160.06 lakh crore, against first revised estimates of ₹149.26 lakh crore

GDP data beats forecasts, grows at 7.2% in FY23

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

INDIA's economy threw up a surprise in the fourth quarter of FY23 as the GDP grew at a robust pace of 6.1%, beating most estimates. This resulted in a full-year growth at 7.2%, exceeding even the government's own estimate of 7%.

The higher-than-expected growth in the fourth quarter was aided by healthy growth in construction (10.4%), hotel and transport (9.1%), agriculture (5.5%) and manufacturing (4.5%) sectors. The economy had grown at 4.4% in the third quarter of FY23.

For the current year (FY24), the RBI has projected a GDP growth rate of 6.5%. According to Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran, India can expect another year of solid economic performance. "Risks are more evenly balanced now as envisaged four months ago. There is a good chance that India may exceed this number (FY24 estimate) this fiscal," he said.

The fourth quarter also saw strong growth of 8.9% in infrastructure investment and asset creation. However, private consumption continues to be a drag as it grew only 2.8% in Q4. Most experts advise caution, saying it's too early to celebrate.

"We must abstain from reading too much into high frequency growth numbers. Continued fiscal and monetary policy coordination is crucial," said Lekha S Chakroborty, professor, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.

NIA conducts raids in Shivamogga, DK districts in PFI conspiracy case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mangaluru

THE National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday raided multiple locations in Dakshina Kannada and Shivamogga districts in connection with the banned Popular Front of India's (PFI) conspiracy to radicalise and train its cadres to carry out acts of terror.

Raids were also conducted at 25 locations in Bihar and Kerala, according to a statement from NIA. Searches were conducted on the premises of the suspects in Katihar district of Bihar, Dakshina Kannada and Shivamogga districts of Karnataka, and Kasaragod, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram districts of Kerala.

Digital devices, including mobile phones, hard disks, SIM cards, pen drives and data cards, and incriminating documents and material related to the banned organisation were seized. The sleuths also seized Rs 17,50,100 from the accused.

So far, 85 locations across the country have been raided in connection with the case. In Dakshina Kannada, raids were conducted in Puttur and Bantwal.

Acting on a tip-off, Bihar police raided a rented premises of one Athar Parvez on July 11, 2022, and seized incriminating articles related to PFI, including a document titled, "India 2047 Towards Rule of Islamic India, Internal Document: Not for circulation". P7

LOKAYUKTA RAIDS

The Lokayukta police raided 57 locations linked to 15 government officials on Wednesday and unearthed assets worth several crores of rupees. P7

VACUUM IN LAW

Sexual assault on dead body not rape, says HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

HOLDING that rape of a dead woman will not attract an offence punishable under the provisions of Section 376 of IPC, the Karnataka High Court recommended to the Union government to amend this Section to introduce the term 'dead body' so that the culprits, who indulge in such acts (rape the dead bodies of men, women or animals), are sentenced to life imprisonment.

The Union government should amend the provisions of Section 377 or introduce a separate provision as an offence against dead women as necrophilia (sexual assault on dead body) or sadism as has been done in the UK, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, to uphold the dignity of dead persons, especially women, said a division bench of Justices B Veerappa and Venkatesh Naik T in an order on May 30.

The court passed the order while setting aside the 10-years imprisonment imposed on Rangaraju for raping a woman after murdering her in Tumakuru district and confirming the imprisonment for life with a fine imposed by the sessions court on him in August 2017. Rangaraju had murdered a 21-year-old girl by slitting her throat while she was returning home from after computer classes in June 2015.

Also, taking note of media reports of alleged incidents of guards raping dead bodies, especially of young women in mortuaries, the court said the state government should put an end to such crimes. Unfortunately in India, no specific legislation has been enacted, including under IPC, for upholding the dignity and protecting the rights of dead persons, especially women, and for preventing crimes against them, the court added. P7